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INDIANA UNIVERSITY
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Bloomington

Despite dean turnovers, school upholds standards

By Brigette Panarisi

11/7/86

Indiana Daily Student

Despite the frequent dean turnover at the IU-Bloomington School of Law, the faculty has maintained the school's high standard of education, school officials say.

"We need someone permanent, but the strength of the law school comes from the faculty here," said Bryant Garth, acting dean. "We can't just sit back and wait for the dean (appointment). . . . We've been waiting over three years."

In recent years the law school has experienced some difficulty in keeping the dean's office permanently occupied: Three law deans have resigned from the school in the past three years.

Law faculty agree that the teaching staff might be more important than a permanent dean.

"The essence of the school is the hard work of the faculty," said Roger Dworkin, professor of law. "I think we've made wonderful progress in all directions."

Colleen Pauwels, a member of the dean search committee, said a permanent dean is not the most important factor of the school.

"I think we in the law school have been fortunate to have exceptional acting deans — especially the present dean," said Pauwels, also director of the law library.

Because of job pressures, law school deans stay in office an average of six years, said Millard Ruud, executive director of the Association of American Law Schools.

"Twenty years ago, most deans stayed (in office) until compulsory retirement," he said. "But with the demands of the position now, early retirement is understandable."

Some deans resign to return to what brought them to teaching, such as research, Garth said.

He took his acting dean position when Maurice Holland left at the end of the last academic year to accept a permanent deanship at the University of Oregon.

At the time of his resignation, Holland was temporarily filling the position for a second time.

The first time he stepped in as acting dean was

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in 1984, after Sheldon Plager, dean for seven years, resigned. Plager is currently working in Washington, D.C., as a counselor to Otis Bowen, secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, Garth said.

In 1985, Morris Arnold was appointed as Plager's permanent replacement. But Arnold resigned four months later to accept a federal judgeship, and Holland stepped back in as acting dean until his departure in May.

Law faculty say they understood the reasons for Arnold's departure and considered the loss their misfortune.

"There is nothing more prestigious than a federal judiciary appointment," said Lauren Robel, assistant professor of law and a member of the dean search committee.

"It was understandable to us that he took the position," she said.

It is necessary to have a permanent dean to serve as a liaison and focal point for alumni, Robel said, adding that the need stems from the aspect of administration and finance.

More than 30 law schools are searching for permanent deans, Robel said.

Although the competition is great, "the law school is not willing to accept a mediocre dean," Robel added. "It's a hard process on everybody to search for a dean, but we don't think it's a hopeless one."

The search committee has no news about possible nominations for the deanship, but will be meeting in the next few weeks to discuss its progress, said William Hicks, professor of law and chairman of the committee.

If by the end of the academic year the committee still hasn't found a permanent dean, Garth said he probably would be reappointed for another year.